Through These Many Years

Commemorating
the 125th Anniversary
of the
Ephraim Moravian Congregation

1853-1978

125th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

The village of Ephraim was founded in 1853 by a small congregation of Moravians. This anniversary booklet was prepared as a memento of the local church's 125h year.

THROUGH THESE MANY YEARS

Commemorating

the 125th Anniversary

of the

Ephraim Moravian Congregation

1853-1978

An Iverson Painting

Thou has kindly led us
Through these many years;
Now accept our praises
And remove our fears.
Grant us all with gladness
To obey Thy voice;
Let Thy will and pleasure
Be our only choice.

Title source from stanza 2 of the Moravian hymn,
Own Thy Congregation.
Composed by Nicholaus L. von Zinzendorf (1738)
Arranged by Christian Gregor (1784)

SPECIAL DESTINY

The Ephraim Moravian congregation honors and builds upon its past as it prepares for the future. The value of such a philosophy was well expressed by the Rt. Rev. James Weingarth in an article written in 1945. Commenting on the historical monument honoring the Moravian colonists who arrived in 1853, Bishop Weingarth said,

> The best tribute of all sees us as today's personifications of that simple idealism and practice of the past. If the pioneers planted so that we might enjoy, it is our special destiny to preserve and adapt. Then the generations who will follow us can also look back and see pioneers, not of exploration and settlement, but of adaptation and preservation.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

https://archive.org/details/throughthesemany00shea

GIVE GOD THE GLORY

The Psalmist said long ago, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy Name give glory" (Psalm 115:1). That is what we at Ephraim must do as we observe the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Moravian Church in this community.

What matters today and tomorrow in this church is not who does what but that what needs doing is done to the glory of God. This church doesn't exist for the sake of Moravianism, though it is a Moravian church. It doesn't exist for the sake of protestantism, though it has a great history and tradition going back over five hundred years. It doesn't exist even for the sake of the Holy, Universal Church. It exists for the sake of the glory of God.

This certainly does not mean that you and I are not needed in the church. We are needed, but with the right motives, seeking not our own pleasure or glory or advancement, but God's glory.

He will be glorified here and must be glorified wherever you and I go. Here we shall say, "Lord, Lord," and do His will as far as it can be done. Much more of His will waits to be done at home, work, school and in all our daily contacts. When "no part of day or night from sacredness" shall be free, then we shall be giving Him the glory all the time. Therefore, "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty."

John H. Johansen

THE UNITAS FRATRUM

The Moravian church traces its origins to Bohemia where a group of reformers came together as the Unitas Fratrum, or Unity of the Brethren, in 1457. By 1517, when Luther was active in Wittenberg, the Unitas Fratrum included 200,000 members. Spreading into Moravia and later into Poland, the Brethren were known for their hymn singing, use of the Bible, piety and church schools.

By 1650 religious and political turmoil in central Europe destroyed most of the organized congregations. Nevertheless, Brethren continued to practice their religious beliefs. In 1722 many moved to Saxony where they founded the village of Herrnhut. There, on August 13, 1727, the church was reborn as the Moravian church, so named because many members had come from Moravia.

Ardent evangelism in Saxony soon led to the establishment of foreign missions. In 1732 Moravians arrived in the West Indies to preach among the slave population on St. Thomas. By 1735 missionaries were working among the American Indians in Georgia and a few years later in Pennsylvania. There in 1741 Moravians founded Bethlehem, the center of the Moravian church in North America.

Moravian congregations around the world accept the common beliefs of protestant Christianity. Services frequently include worshippers from many different denominations. Worship services are liturgical in form with music holding a prominent place. Moravians practice the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. Young people become communicant members through confirmation, adults are received with the right hand of fellowship. Moravian belief and practice is best expressed by the motto:

In essentials, unity;
In non-essentials, liberty;
In all things, charity (love).

Southeastern Portion of Holy Roman Empire, 1648

THE PROLOGUE

Immigrants to a new land, confronted with strange customs and a different language, tend to congregate with their own kind for a renewal of confidence, comfort and sociability. Such was the case in 1849 with a scattering of Scandinavians in Milwaukee who began gathering together under the leadership of M. Olson, originally of Farsund, Norway. The group met in various homes for worship.

It soon became apparent to Olson that the Scandinavians needed an official leader. Being familiar with the faith, the Unitas Fratrum, he wrote to the Moravian organization in Norway inquiring about a pastor for the small Milwaukee flock.

Andreas (Andrew) M. Iverson, a student at the Lutheran Missionary school in Stavanger, had been preparing to go to Africa as a missionary for that denomination. Selected from a group of three candidates for the Milwaukee post, Iverson gladly accepted. He had been in contact with Moravians in Norway and felt comfortable with them. Giving up his Lutheran mission plans, he paid off his educational debt to the missionary school and set off for America. Recently married, Iverson at the time was just 26 years old.

Arriving in Milwaukee, Iverson began to draw the Scandinavians together, and in a few months, Moravian headquarters in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, was notified that a congregation was ready to be formed. After investigation and a favorable report by Rev. Fett, the first Scandinavian congregation of the Brethren in the midwest was organized October 22, 1849.

In his notes, Iverson records the names of the original members, a number of whom later made Ephraim their permanent home. Received by the handclasp of fellowship were

Henry Johnson	Rasmus W. Hanson
Hans Peder Jacobsen	Martine Johnson
Tonnes Davidson	Tobine Jacobi
Zacharias Morbek	Stine Marcussen
Adolph Cederholm	Zacharias C. Wathne
A. Svendson	Andrew Nelson
O. Olson	Anne Nelson
A. Aanesen	Andrew Iverson
Ole Bjornson	Laura Iverson

Twelve were from Norway, four from Denmark and two from Sweden. The Nelsons had two small children.

Brother Iverson was ordained at Bethlehem, May 7, 1850. While he was in the East he met Nils Otto Tank who had come to America for what he termed the express purpose of giving aid to fledgling church groups. Tank traveled to

Milwaukee to confer with the young congregation, and acting on the wishes of the members, spent considerable time investigating possible land purchases in southern and eastern Wisconsin.

Meanwhile, the small Moravian nucleus in Milwaukee attracted new members and looked forward to the time when they might find a permanent home. Rev. Iverson cites the reason for moving as a collective desire to live in the country where, the congregation was convinced, there was 'less temptation.' A practical consideration was the fact that many of the immigrant Brethren were being cheated out of their wages in the city.

Tank finally found suitable land at Fort Howard (Green Bay), and the group accepted his offer to finance the purchase. The congregation traveled by boat to Fort Howard, arriving on August 1, 1850. A closely knit community was formed in that area, laid out and directed by their financial benefactor, Nils Tank. For a time it appeared that the experiment in communal living would flower. Dissension soon arose, according to Rev. Iverson's records, when Tank allegedly reneged on his verbal pledge that members could ultimately purchase their plots of land and work for themselves.

In the 1850's travel in northeastern Wisconsin was often faster and easier on water than on land.

Much has been written about Nils Otto Tank, his extensive work in the foreign mission field, and his American activities. He was a member of the Norwegian aristocracy, and although his altruistic endeavors appeared in opposition to his heritage, Rev. Iverson in later years commented that he felt Tank was trying to set up a tenant farming system at Fort Howard. Since this was one of the factors causing emigration from Norway, such restrictive living chafed members of the new community, and their discontent was sharpened by Rev. Iverson's reactions.

Fanning the flames of discord was a deep personality clash between the young pastor and the aristocratic, somewhat overbearing Tank. This feeling might well have been a residual of the old Europe where lack of communication between the aristocracy and the other classes was an inevitable way of life. Without this very human emotion on the pastor's part, Ephraim would never have been born, at least not in 1853. As for Tank, it must be said that without his personal effort and financial backing, the young congregation could never have moved to Fort Howard, at least not at that time, no matter how distasteful the communal setup apparently proved to be.

The situation at Fort Howard finally became so acute that in the spring of 1851 members began leaving the land owned by Tank. They found odd jobs to earn a meager living. The time had come to look for a new home if the congregation was to remain intact. In July 1852, Rev. Iverson traveled along the shores of Green Bay to explore land that would later be known as Sturgeon Bay. He considered the area unsuitable, though a few of the Fort Howard colonists had scattered there. His news was received with disappointment on his return.

It was in the fall of 1852 that the Fort Howard Moravians received a visit from Ole Larsen. This Norwegian immigrant from Skien, in the southern part of Norway, had established a home on Eagle Island and made his living by fishing and woodcutting. He told them about the mainland opposite his home, described the excellent stand of hardwood trees and reported the fishing very fine. Larsen urged them to examine the land and consider it for their permanent home. Due to this enthusiastic description, the first step toward the new community was made.

AN EARLY HELPER

Ole Larsen gave many practical assists to the infant congregation in the early 1850's. His first meeting with Pastor Iverson had occurred several years earlier in Buffalo, New York. Later, Larsen moved to Fort Howard and in 1850 settled on Eagle Island.

Larsen guided Rev. Iverson on his first visit here, and when the earliest settlers moved to the area, provided hospitality and guidance. He was received into the Ephraim congregation and listed among its founders.

Larsen later moved to the present Peninsula State Park where he turned to farming. Today a marker, sponsored and financed by the Ephraim Men's Club designates the homesite. Ole Larsen was the great-grandfather of present church member, Charles S. Larsen. Ole's son, William was a Green Bay resident. William's son, Sumner, also of Green Bay, operated Shorewood Lodge here for a time as did the Charles Larsens.

THE ONESONS

Miss Gordie Oneson, a lifelong member of the Ephraim Moravian Church, is the granddaughter of Abraham Oneson, one of the three original settlers who came here in 1853 with Pastor Iverson. Mrs. Abraham Oneson brought a supply of appleseeds with her and lived to eat the apples from the trees that the seeds produced. Bernt Oneson, son of Abraham Oneson, was the first white child born in Ephraim. He was baptized by Pastor Iverson on June 5, 1854. Miss Oneson's father, Andrew, was Bernt's older brother. Gordie has a home on the property originally purchased by her grandfather.

FIRST YEARS

> I put my foot on shore for the first time in the name of Jesus, silently and with strange feelings.
> Rev. Iverson, February 1853

Although it was in May 1853 that the colony officially arrived, Rev. Iverson had visited the area the preceding February accompanied by Gabriel Wathne and Abraham Aanesen (Oneson). They were joined near Sturgeon Bay by Melchior Jacobs.

The pastor reported that they traveled over "snow covered" ice and toward the end of their trip encountered a rift in the ice over which they had to jump. Arriving at the Ole Larsen home, they received a warm welcome. The following morning they felt "only a little stiff" from their walk between Fort Howard and Green Bay, so accompanied by their host, they set off across smooth ice carrying diagrams and maps.

The group examined the land, walking to the east where the snow in the woods measured about one foot. Wathne dug into the ground bringing up dark earth. (Rev. Iverson later speculated whether the colony might have settled here had Wathne struck rock immediately. The poor soil conditions would cause much grief as the colonists sought to cultivate the rocky soil.)

Basic references indicate this was a relatively normal winter. Early December snows had probably covered the ground preventing deep frost, since Wathne dug into the soil with apparent ease. Thick ice on the outer Green Bay indicated sustained cold temperatures although not abnormally so. Perpetual currents accounted for the ice rifts in that area. Rev. Iverson refers to crossing Eagle Harbor on smooth ice, a condition later cherished by skaters. It can be speculated that the inner harbor had frozen during a dead calm. By February a warm pre-spring sun touched the top crust in the daytime while still persistent freezing night temperatures kept the surface polished to a frosty glaze.

The land looked good to the visitors, and they felt that a home had been found. Larsen returned with them to Fort Howard, and from there, he and Rev. Iverson went to Menasha. There they purchased 425 acres of land fronting on Eagle Harbor and extending beyond the bluff. The price averaged $1.12½ per acre. The transaction was made possible through a $500 loan from Bishop H.A. Schultz.

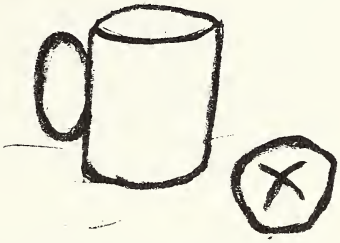
Before leaving Fort Howard, the colony chose "Ephraim" (very fruitful) as the name of their new home. It was also decided that the land would be divided into town and agricultural lots, back to back.

The Iverson household arrived in May 1853, taking up residence with the Larsens on Eagle Island. Soon other brethren arrived and built small shanties

where they lived until their homes on the mainland were completed. Each mainland lot sold for $4.00, and the first purchasers were Zacharias Wathne, Henry Johnson, H.P. Jacobs and Abraham Oneson. Of the original houses, only the Iverson homestead, which was the first Moravian parsonage, remains in its original state. It is presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Field.

By late fall of 1853, the Moravian community included four unmarried brethren, five families and four children, who met informally until the pastor's home was completed. From then on his living room provided the congregation's meeting place, the services being held at least five times a week.

The first Christmas here was described as "one of limited means," but for the participants it was a moving experience. On Christmas Day, local people were joined by Norwegians from Fish Creek and the Larsen family from Eagle Island. A small lovefeast was held as well as Holy Communion. This is the first reference to a lovefeast in the new community.



As he had been charged to do by Bethlehem headquarters, Rev. Iverson engaged in mission work away from this area and for a time lived in Cooperstown, Wisconsin. The settlers continued their religious activities here with lay leaders during his absence. In February 1854, Rev. Iverson returned to Ephraim struggling alone through blizzard conditions. Gaining shelter near Fish Creek, two residents there volunteered to accompany him to Eagle Island. From there he left for the mainland, where he found Pauline Larsen conducting school in the first house he visited.

Ephraim Moravians can well be proud of their forebearers' interest in providing education for their children. Their efforts are generally noted as the unofficial beginning of the Door County educational system. (Rev. Iverson was elected Gibraltar township superintendent of schools in 1857, his business being to help establish school districts. Gibraltar at that time included all of northern Door County except for Washington Island and Sevastopol.)

Services continued at the Iverson home, but with increasing membership, the need for a separate church building became apparent. More Scandinavians had emigrated here, and there was a growing German population. Work on the church began in the spring of 1857. Due to financial setbacks within the community, it was not completed until 1859. Meantime, the first confirmation services were held at the Iverson house in April 1857, and first reception of members took place the following month.

Bishop Schultz, who had throughout the formative years of the congregation, extended financial help and personal encouragement, came to visit the community in 1858. Seeing Ephraim in the distance Bishop Schultz was reported to have exclaimed, "Ach es ist Alles wunderschön" (Oh, this is wonderful). The sentiment has been expressed many ways, many times, in succeeding years.

Wonderful it may have first appeared to the visitor, but life in the early years was extremely difficult. Hard work often went for naught as crops failed and extreme poverty resulted. A less hardy group of pioneers would have been defeated. Some of them indeed felt that way and moved to other areas, but the main body of church people remained.

Rev. Iverson was proven a competent surveyor when his original village plat was examined in 1859 and legalized with few changes. He also surveyed the Moravian cemetery, a secluded spot on the hill. It was consecrated December 2, 1858. An earlier resting place had been provided on Eagle Island for several victims of a severe cholera outbreak among settlers who had not yet moved to the mainland.

In contrast to the first service, the Christmas Eve observance of 1861 was a more elaborate affair. There was a decorated tree, gifts and a children's festival where an intensive revival took place.

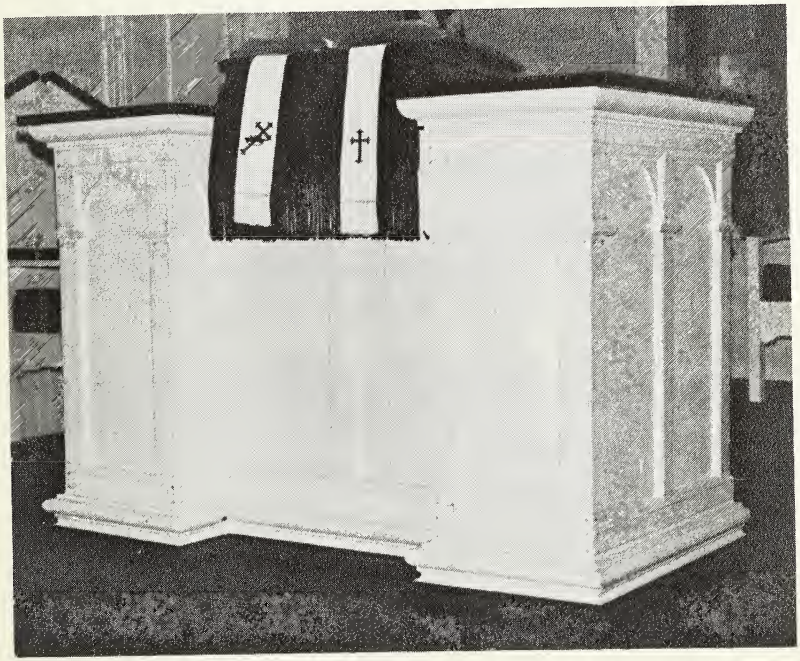
Rev. Iverson continued his mission service as well as tending to the local church, working with groups in Wisconsin and Illinois. One of the areas of special attention was Sturgeon Bay, where a congregation was finally incorporated after several rocky years.

Ephraim in the 1860's, although still physically remote, was gradually entering into the commerce of the outside world. In addition to farming and fishing, local residents engaged in cutting and selling timber for telegraph poles and fence posts. A pier built in 1858 by Aslag Anderson and P. Peterson aided commercial enterprise. The property, including a half mile of shore frontage, had been sold to the men by the congregation for $200.

Rev. A.M. Iverson officially concluded his pastorate in Ephraim on July 6, 1864, leaving for Leland, Illinois. In 1866, he returned to Fort Howard where he served as a Moravian pastor until 1883. He moved to Sturgeon Bay in 1898, and although advancing in age, often walked the two miles from his home to the Moravian church to attend services. He died in Sturgeon Bay January 16, 1907 and is buried at Bayside cemetery there.

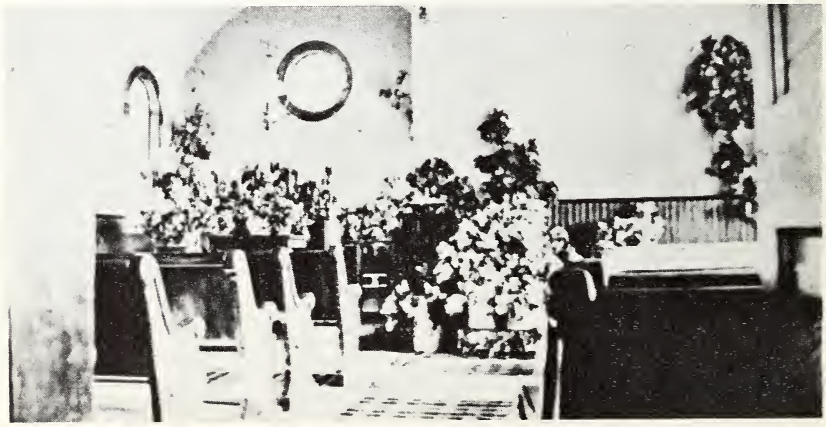
MADE BY HAND

Certainly one of the oldest pieces of Door County handmade furniture is the pulpit located in the sanctuary. This pulpit, built by Rev. Iverson in the late 1850's, was used in the church for a number of years. Members then apparently felt something new was in order so they gave the pulpit to a church in Hainesville. Through the efforts of H.R. Holand and the Ephraim Men's Club, it was returned to the home church in 1922. It was relegated to the fellowship room, then replaced in the sanctuary and dedicated December 16, 1956. The original church pews, built by the pastor and fellow members, followed a circuitous route. They were used by the Sister Bay church, stored in the Liberty Grove town hall, and finally returned to Ephraim in the 1950's. Presently, they are in the Francis Hardy Memorial Gallery.

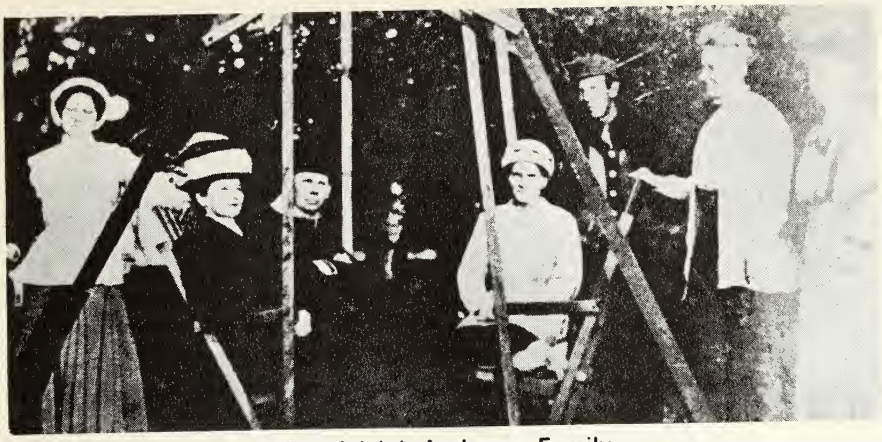


First services were at the Iverson Parsonage

The Little Gleaners in 1896



Interior of the church - 1900



The Adolph Anderson Family

SIX GENERATIONS
Karen Smith - 1st
Jacob Smith - 2nd
Mrs. B.D. Thorp - 3rd
Ivan Thorp - 4th
Not pictured:
Glen Thorp - 4th
Bert Thorp - 5th
Burt D. Thorp - 6th

Friends enjoy a party

HARDSHIPS AND JOYS

It was growing time for the Ephraim church during the last quarter of the 1800's. Door County was being settled, and Ephraim attracted new waves of residents. Norwegians, in the majority at first, were joined by Germans, many of whom settled to the east. Services were conducted in Norwegian with some German services also scheduled. Norwegian remained the official language in the church records until the turn of the century and was continued at some of the services into the 1900's.

It was reported with pride at the church council of 1903 that the local church, being a self-supporting charge, would send a representative to Synod.

Mission work was conducted by the Moravian pastors. Their pay was aided by the sale of peas and oats grown on the church farm.

Local members were "affectionately chided" for allowing the spirit of the world to often control their lives. Parents were urged to bring their children to church as well as Sunday School. Notice was taken that many local members were absent from services during the tourist season, a situation viewed with understanding by some of the pastors but not by all of them.

Rev. Pettersson returned in 1910 to find a renovated parsonage, proof that the church was keeping up with the times.

Financial condition of the church rose and fell with the weather. In 1912, meager crops, a cold and stormy summer, and a plague of grasshoppers cast a pall on the budget.

No matter what the financial climate, through the years the Ladies Aid, Willing Workers, Little Gleaners and Christian Endeavor worked to earn money for worthy causes at home and in the mission field.

Around 1915 the church boards voted to connect the church with the local light plant and in several council minutes note was made of the heating problem, a subject that in various forms has appeared on agendas right up to the present.

Sale of the Manassah Moravian parsonage and land east of Ephraim brought $514. This sum was returned by the church extension board to help pay for an addition to the church.

Pastor Andrews expressed gratitude in 1918 for the "almost new" Ford car purchased for his use. The national influenza epidemic was felt to some extent, but no deaths were reported among the membership. Great joy and relief was evidenced at church services on the signing of the Armistice.

In 1921, the Ladies Aid printed the first edition of the Ephraim cookbook. Its popularity has called for several revisions and reprints.

The post-war years were relatively stable, and there appeared to be no dire emergencies. It was, however, a period when Ephraim was either without a pastor or shared one with Sister Bay. In 1926, Sister Bay was removed from the joint charge with Ephraim but was returned the following year. It is now a separate charge.

Mention is made in the records of the depression in the early 1930's. The pastor reported members are "meeting the situation calmly." In 1932 ten acres of church land were sold and the property later divided into lots.

After much discussion on whether to build a new parsonage, or to move and remodel the old one, the latter course was approved. It was a major product of the late 1940's, extending into the following decade.

The parsonage project and construction of the new addition to the church in the 1950's could not have been accomplished without the hundreds of hours volunteered by the men of the church. It was through their efforts, and others who worked far below scale, that the cost was kept within practical limits.

The congregation's centennial in 1953, which was Ephraim's celebration as well, was a cause for great rejoicing. A number of services and programs were planned.

During the 1960's, members rested from their building labors, but the tempo of activity kept pace with the times. This restless period in history, from 1960 to the present, has also been one of profound change within the community. In the beginning, the village built its life around the church. And while the influx of new people and new interests has dissipated this focus to some degree, the Moravian Church still occupies a major place in the community. It radiates a serene stability, an important contribution to a small village trying to achieve change with some semblance of order and grace.

"FIRST" FACTS

The nucleus of the Ephraim Moravian group was the first Scandinavian congregation of the Brethren established in the midwest. Ephraim Moravians started one of the first schools in Door County. They built the first house of worship in the county. It is one of the oldest church buildings in the northern part of Wisconsin in continuous use. Andrew Iverson was the first resident pastor in Door County.

FORMER PASTORS

A.M. Iverson
1850-1864

J.J. Groenfeldt
1864-1883

John Greenfield
1884
1895-1902

A. Pettersson
1884-1895
1910-1914

Calvin Kinsey
1902-1908

Walter Gapp
1908-1909

Samuel Groenfeldt
1914-1918

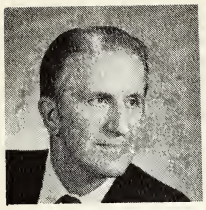
Mark Andrews
1918-1924

H.J. Engelke
1925

Clement Hoyler
1925-1926

George Westphal
1926-1931
1946-1947

John Hoesman
1936-1939



James Weingarth
1940-1946

Warren Sautebin
1947-1949

Wilbur Behrend
1949-1956

Albert Harke
1956

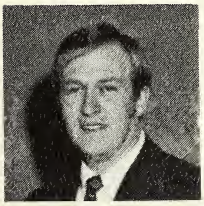
Eugene Glasser
1957-1960

David Jones
1960-1963

James Dittmer
1963-1964

Roderick Evansen
1964-1969

Frank Splies
1969



Charles Harberg
1969-1971

Hermann Weinlick
1971-1975

Not pictured:
Ole Ingebrigtsen
1883
Christian Madsen
1883-1884
Francis Weber
1931-1936

OUR FEELINGS

The Ephraim Moravian Church represents many different things to the members of its congregation. For some, the building and its location suggest strength and peace. For others, the communion of members - with rich friendships extending into social and community life - holds the most meaning. To others, parts of the ritual are most significant and the constancy of the church calendar lends continuity to their lives. And finally, for many families, membership in the church symbolizes the entire life cycle from baptism to burial from generation to generation.

Here are comments by some members when asked what their church means to them.

The Ephraim Moravian Church —

has stood like a rock high above the waters of Ephraim for 125 years. So the pastor and people of the congregation stand together to give us all strength, through Christ, for our daily lives.

gives me peace as suggested by the line of the hymn "and peace like a river flows over my soul."

offers peace of mind, love of life, and the feeling that all is well with Our Savior.

is our home.

stands so peacefully on the hill, and when I enter I feel a certain peace.

has provided past generations with faith, hope, and strength through its love. Today the church offers all people light and direction for the future.

is best shown by the concern, the thoughtfulness, and the friendly warmth of the minister and the congregation.

means love and fellowship with friends and loved ones.

provides the opportunity to hear a fine sermon to prepare me for a fuller life.

is my spiritual home because of the inspiring sermons and the warmth of the congregation.

is a place to find fellow Christians, to hear a thought-provoking sermon, to listen to beautiful music, and to "recharge" my spiritual batteries.

gives us Christian friendship and daily lessons in the Christian way of life through sermons, music, and circle lessons.

is where the love of Christ is in our midst.

has enriched my life with love and hope through the congregation and its fellowship.

extends warmth to me. I am grateful to the founders for setting up the church despite the work of getting settled.

offers friendship and a comforting place in which to worship God.

symbolizes my heritage.

is happiness — sunrise service, Easter breakfast, New Year's Eve lovefeast, knowing Jesus, love.

offers a Christian welcome to all as shown by the right hand of fellowship extended during the communion service.

is peace and joy symbolized by the stained glass windows.

a place to share part of yourself and a place to give and receive love with a variety of people.

Sunday School children added these comments.

The church is —

a place to be friends.

a place to learn more about Jesus, God, and the Bible and is fun.

studying about miracles and prayer.

faith in God and remembrance of Christ.

working with God to help people who need help.

learning about the Bible and the special people in it.

where I go to Sunday School, and it's a big church.

a place where everyone's friendly and everyone has fun and learns at the same time.

MANASSAH CHURCH

A German Moravian congregation was organized at Manassah in October, 1875. This church had its own pastor at times and during some years it was served by pastors from Ephraim. Around 1911, Manassah was given up as a separate congregation, and many of its members united with the Ephraim church. A number of Ephraim's present members are descendants of people in the Manassah congregation.

HOW FIRM THIS FOUNDATION

> For many years, this church has formed a part of the Ephraim scene. Certainly the lives of many have been blessed by its presence. . . . But the building itself is useless without the people. It is therefore the part of the present generation to resolve that this house . . . shall be preserved continually beautiful and fully used to the further Glory of God. . . .
>
> Rev. F.E. Weber, 1934.

Although aware of the Brethren's diaspora activities, Moravian pioneers in Ephraim could hardly have predicted that their church building would attract visitors from many countries. They could not foresee that the building on its permanent hillside spot would be the focus of thousands of cameras, the subject of many paintings.

What concerned the early members most in the 1850's were growing pains. Services were held in the Iverson house, the only available quarters. It was a pleasant meeting place where hymns of the people were occasionally joined in antiphonal chorus by the placid sounds of livestock in the stalls below. But the growing congregation was beginning to overflow the parlor.

A separate building was the next logical step and the year 1857 saw beginnings of a drive to secure such accommodations. The local congregation received financial support from friends of the cause in Bethlehem, through their special benefactor, Bishop H.A. Schultz. He had come to their aid earlier when funds were needed for land purchases. Ephraim members also opened a subscription list with good results.

Plans called for a structure 40 x 24 feet, 16 feet high, with a steeple. Most of the people preferred a hill location, but two of their number were so opposed that the site finally selected was near the shore.

By early fall the stone foundation was completed, and Tonnes Davidson, a member of the congregation at Fort Howard, was engaged to superintend construction. Captain Clough of Chambers Island brought lumber from Cedar River, Michigan, in his flat-bottomed schooner, Pocahantas. Rev. Iverson went along as deckhand and cook. The building was under roof by winter, but work during 1858 was at a standstill because of a crop failure and serious financial reverses.

New impetus came in 1859. The efforts of local residents intensified, and contributions were received from Sturgeon Bay, Fort Howard, New Denmark,

Mishicot, Chicago and Mission Point, Illinois—all of them reflections of Rev. Iverson's missionary work. By mid-November, a spire was placed on the steeple. Rev. Iverson built the pulpit and assisted with the pews. Another gift from Bethlehem provided money for lamps, a stove and other equipment, and a steel bell was installed.

"It was sublime!" This was the pastor's notation about the church dedication on December 18, 1859. People from many areas joined the local congregation for services. Gabriel Wathne, the official bell ringer, carried out his job with such vigor that the bell cracked. It was later returned to the foundry for repairs.

The church remained at its shore location until 1883 when it was relocated on the hillside at a cost of $321. Workmen accomplished the move by using a horse and a winch. According to one record, the building was taken up present County Trunk Q to Moravia Street, and from there up the final incline.

A complete church remodeling took place in 1896 at a cost of $1900. Half this amount was raised by the local congregation, the rest collected by the pastor from other Moravian churches in the midwest. Assistance from other congregations was necessary because it was a number of years before the Ephraim church became self sufficient. This exalted status was noted with pride in a report to church council by Rev. C.R. Kinsey, who said, "1903 was a wonderful year for the congregations at Ephraim and Sister Bay. They were received by Synod as a self supporting charge."

Peace Be To This Congregation

As the congregation grew, so did the activities. In 1916 a sizeable addition was built onto the east side of the church at a cost of $1275. At the same time, the building was completely repainted, new window glass installed and the church interior redecorated.

In the early 1950's, frequent meetings were held to discuss plans for a major addition to the church. Final plans, drawn by Architect Frank Shattuck, were approved by church council in November, 1953. Mr. Shattuck offered his plans and advice without charge. The addition—consecrated November 13, 1955, by Bishop I. Richard Mewaldt—included four Sunday school rooms, a kitchen, and an enlarged fellowship hall. The pastor's study and workroom were completed later. Cost of this project was $30,000, but men in the congregation put in many hours of work to help keep it within the budget.

On June 27, 1958, a plaque was dedicated commemorating the 100th anniversary of the first house of worship in Door County. Young people played musical selections and excerpts were read from Rev. Iverson's Journal. (It was an impressive occasion and no one cared at all that the plaque had been delivered nearly a year late.) The small marker on a modest sized stone can be seen opposite the village hall. It is assumed that the church stood near the middle of present Highway 42. The larger marker to the south commemorates the arrival of Ephraim pioneers.

During the 125th anniversary year, 1978, major redecoration and repair of the church sanctuary was completed. A bequest from the late Dr. Thor Johnson and a financial contribution from the Women's Fellowship provided funds for this project. A new carillon was also installed.

In the sanctuary are decorative and memorial appointments, simple in design, blending without distracting from the primary focus of the area. This is the heart of the building; open to all, a direct access to its reason for being.

Greatest story ever told

A FAMILIAR NAME

The Groenfeldt family has played a distinguished role in the Ephraim Moravian Church. Rev. J.J. Groenfeldt served as pastor from 1864 to 1883, the longest pastorate on record for this church. Rev. John Greenfield was here from 1895 to 1902 and Rev. Samuel Groenfeldt from 1914 to 1918. Both were sons of the Rev. J.J. Groenfeldt. Their combined service extended over 30 years. Rt. Rev. John Groenfeldt is president of the Provincial Elders Conference, Northern Province, Moravian Church. Son of the late Samuel Groenfeldt, he has property in Door County and has been a frequent visitor here.

NEARING A CENTENNIAL

The goal of the Ephraim Moravian Women's Fellowship is: "Every Moravian woman enlisted for Christ and active in the work of the church." As the name implies, fellowship is truly a most important ingredient of the group. Members meet four times a year, while smaller circles meet monthly, to study the Bible, to help in the work of the church, and to socialize.

Functions of the Fellowship focus on spiritual life, mission study, Christian outreach and service. Spiritual lives are enriched and expanded through work with a Bible study outline at monthly meetings. The Moravian creed - "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, love" - comes out loud and clear in the lively discussions during these sessions.

Mission study provides knowledge and awareness of the missions supported by the church as a whole. This is a broad subject to cover.

Christian outreach directs attention to the community and its needs. Many women who are not members of the church are actively involved in both the Fellowship and the circles. Without their interest and help, the group would be much less effective. There has been greater emphasis on outreach as more new people move into the village and more visitors appear year 'round.

Years ago a group of regular summer visitors began to meet and formed the Summer Circle. Today, the group continues its work, bringing together women who are not church members in Ephraim but who are interested in the church and the village, Among its activities are money-making projects for the church. Contributions toward renewal projects within the church building has enabled the Fellowship to support projects outside the local congregation.

Because of the Moravian interest in missions, the Fellowship tries to help others who are less fortunate by extending spiritual, educational and medical help. A large part of the group's yearly budget is sent to Gray Memorial Hospital in Nicaragua. Thus fellowship is the key word - fellowship in the church, the community and the world.

In 1980 the women's organization of the Ephraim congregation will observe a Centennial year. Official activities for church women began on February 10, 1880, under the name Ladies' Aid. In the sense of an auxiliary, or helper to the church, the name was well-chosen. (On January 13, 1955, the name was changed to Women's Fellowship, indicating perhaps an expansion of goals.)

The charter statement was signed by Mrs. Jacob (Sophia) Smith, Mrs. Aslag (Greta) Anderson and Mrs. J.J. (Catherine) Groenfeldt. It stated that the Ladies' Aid would be composed of members and friends of the Ephraim Moravian Church, an early indication of the outgoing nature of the organization.

The charter document listed the following aims:

> We, earnestly desiring to do something for the Kingdom of God in Home and Foreign Land, pledge ourselves to do willing handwork. We will meet twice a month from 1 o'clock in the afternoon until 6 o'clock. As we believe all blessing comes from God, each meeting will be opened with song, scripture reading and prayer.

The first meeting was held at the parsonage on March 1, 1880, thus beginning a record of intensive, persistent and enthusiastic service to the church.

Many years later, on April 17, 1938, a sacred drama was presented in the church as part of a dedication service for the illuminated cross installed in the chancel. It honors the three charter members of the Ladies' Aid.

Money-raising events were held in abundance during the early years. On July 4, 1887, the Ladies' Aid raised $5.95 through cake and coffee sales, and the Young Ladies' Society held an auction netting $10.97. Sociables were held in 1887 and 1888. Materials purchased for these events included two chickens, 40 cents; coffee and sugar, 46 cents; oysters and crackers, $2.40. Ten dollars was given to foreign missions in 1888, and the young women collected $6.50 from the young men as payment toward a new church chandelier. The Ladies' Aid chipped in the rest of the cost and paid the freight.

Kneeling for other reasons

Entertainment and other activities were planned. In 1890, the first sale to a summer resident was recorded. She bought a set of table mats for 58 cents. During the early 1900's the women began contributing to the pastor's salary. Amounts such as $10 and $25 were significant sums for that period.

Visitors to Ladies' Aid meetings were plentiful, and their names carefully recorded. Many men's names were listed as well as those of children. Summer people always received a warm welcome.

Through the years, the women have continued to respond to the needs of the church, each task being approached with brisk determination. One such activity, scheduled on an annual basis, was The Country Store. Originated in 1950 by Mrs. David Stevens and several friends, the event contributed greatly to the women's organization budget. The Country Store has now given way to the Strawberry Festival and Bazaar, for which planning and preparation is year 'round. This,too, has been a successful source of revenue.

If ever there is question as to the diligence of women in the Moravian congregation, the answer is found in numerous church council minutes. Expressed in various ways, the sentiments echo an early entry.

> The Ladies' Aid was given a rising vote of thanks for its hearty cooperation in the work of the church.

THE MORAVIAN WAY

Love, learning and practical discipline are reflected in the Moravian Sunday School rooms. Here, intermixed, are a listing of the Prophets, geographical explanations of Biblical places, texts for the day and a no-nonsense sign displayed on an antique musical instrument. It says, "Hands off this organ."

THE "COUNTRY" CIRCLE

During the 1930's a number of ladies (mostly living in the country beyond the bluff) held regular afternoon meetings in each other's homes. Husbands and children joined them for supper and an evening of fellowship. In addition to Bible study and worship, the "country" circle held some money-raising events which are still well remembered. Among the more successful evenings was a public dinner in the village hall followed by a style show. Period outfits and hats found in attics and trunks were modeled while a washboard band provided the music. Tickets for the entire evening's fun sold for $1.00. The group, aided by the husbands, also presented several plays. A mock marriage especially drew raves from a capacity crowd at the hall.

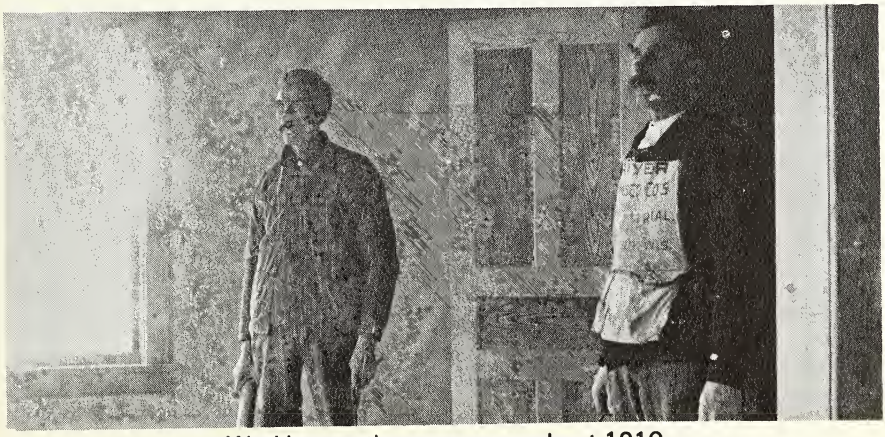
Sunday School celebrates a holiday

Herman Hogenson's Sunday School boys

"In 1953 we sang Bless This House"

We had a summer picnic

Church family names are embroidered on this quilt



Working on the parsonage about 1910

SUMMER PEOPLE

The relationship of summer people to the local church is an interesting phenomenon peculiar to this and similar resort areas. First mention of this group appeared in the 1901 church council report by Pastor Greenfield who noted, "During the summer months, the population of our little village is more than doubled by the influx of city people who spend their vacations with us." In 1906, Pastory Kinsey commented, "In view of the abundance of summer people, I would suggest the propriety of adding to the supply of hymn books."

Their stays were at first confined within the span of warm months. Now generous vacation time and an increasing number of dwellings built or remodeled for year-round use enable them to enjoy these congenial surroundings in all seasons of the year.

Many of the summer people have found and continue to find the Moravian worship both appealing and rewarding, and the institution provides a common meeting ground with permanent residents. Local pastors share the joys and minister to the sorrows of all with equal warmth and understanding. Having found something that apparently adds enrichment to their lives, the summer people express recognition in a number of ways. They contribute not only financially, but with gifts of time, talent and service.

Worshipping, working and socializing together, ties between summer and permanent residents are strong, and there exists a warm feeling of mutual affection and respect.

SERVING THE CHURCH

One member of the Ephraim Moravian congregation entered the ministry of the Moravian church. Rev. Robert H. Smith is now serving at DeForest, Wisconsin, a post he assumed on January 25, 1978. Bob was ordained a deacon in the ministry on July 30, 1961, at the Ephraim church. During the same service, his wife, the former Margaret "Peggy" Dittmer was received as an acolyte in the mission service of the church. The couple spent three years at Christiansted in the Virgin Islands. Rev. Smith then served churches at both Rudolph and Madison, Wisconsin, and Fargo, North Dakota. Bob's mother is Mrs. Elda Smith, who resides in Sister Bay. Peggy's parents, the Rev. and Mrs. James Dittmer, are in Unionville, Michigan. The Smiths have two children, Brenda and David.

COME LET US SING

I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the
midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.
(Text for anniversary date May 25, 1978)
II Thessalonians 4:11)

From the beginning congregational singing was a very important part of the Moravian experience as reflected in the publication of a hymnal over 450 years ago. Music was an integral part of the Moravian daily life which centered around the church community. Many of the early ministers were accomplished musicians, composing their own sacred choral works, later with instrumental accompaniments. In fact, frequently ministers composed new works specifically for special church festival days.

Count Nicholaus von Zinzendorf wrote his first hymn at age 12 and by the time of his death at 60 had composed over 2000 hymns. John Cennick and James Montgomery are perhaps the two Moravian hymn writers who contributed most significantly to hymnody in general. (When the most recent Moravian Hymnal was published in 1969 it included two hymns by Hermann Weinlick, former pastor at Ephraim.)

These were the hymns the early Moravians brought to America, along with great libraries of chorales and instrumental music, for brass choirs and church bands. From 1750 to the early 1800's Moravian church music reached its "golden age." Minister musicians continued to compose, and emissaries from Europe brought

"Join We All With One Accord"

these new works to the American congregations. When newer editions of music began to be published in the late 1800's, old manuscripts were gradually laid aside in church storerooms and archives. Who could perceive that a century later much of this same music would be revived in symphonic concert under the baton of Dr. Thor Johnson.

Such was the musical heritage that Iverson's little group of Moravians brought to Ephraim in 1853. In his diary Iverson noted that an experienced choir had been added to the church service, and a few years later a melodeon was given, "bringing into harmony" the beautiful liturgies and litanies so much a part of the Moravian service.

Singing has always been the forte of Ephraim Moravians. (Who can forget the trio of Herman Hogenson, a rich full bass; Everett Valentine, who sang like an Irish tenor; Sam Hogenson, who provided the melody.) In the 1930's F. Melius Christiansen from St. Olaf College conducted a choral school at the village hall. A new event for Ephraim, the sessions were well attended.

In ensuing summers, Hymn Sings on Sunday evenings at the village hall became a follow-up of the choral school of the summers' past. The Sings, as they were called, became an annual summer event for many years. The Moravian Sunday nite worship service was abandoned. Everyone was at the Sing.

Musical talent was never lacking in our church, especially during the summer. There was always someone to offer music to enrich our services - guest organists, pianists, soloists and ensembles.

An event of great importance was the donation and installation of Ephraim's first Hammond electric organ, followed by wall chimes, a complete sound system and organists to play them.

When the Ephraim Moravian Church celebrated its Centennial in 1953, the Peninsula Arts Association (c. 1938) whose sole aim was to encourage the arts in our area — literature, music, painting and crafts — provided the celebration with a dream come true. A festival of symphonic concerts was presented during July and August.

At about the same time, Dr. Johnson, the music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and a Moravian himself, became interested in the musical heritage of his church. As a result, the first Early American Moravian Music Festival was held in Bethlehem in June, 1950. It provided impetus for another festival a few years later and from that point on, held each June down to the present day.

It was inevitable that Dr. Johnson come into our area. Founder of the Peninsula Music Festival, he was its permanent conductor until his death in 1975. During

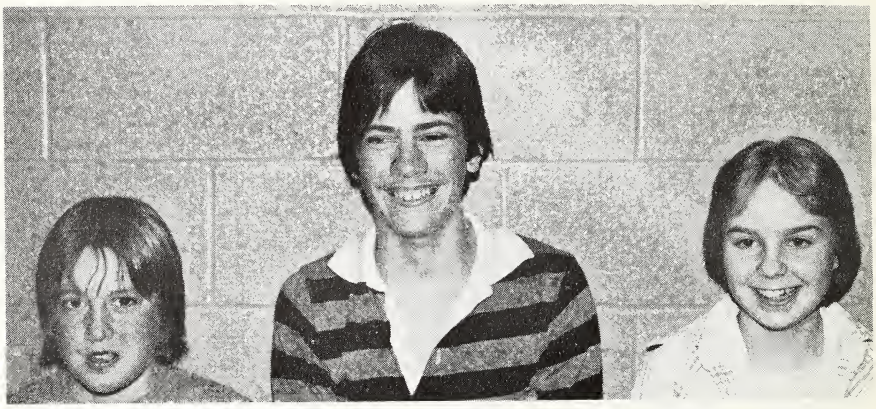
this time, he became a member of our congregation. Thor Johnson's contributions to our church music were unlimited and generous. In spite of a busy schedule, he provided summer programs of special soloists and brass choirs which he usually directed himself. Five of his hymn tune revisions are included in the new hymnal.

Our pianists, organists and choir directors are an integral part of the congregation, coming up through the ranks, seeming to meld with the church and changed only by life span. Ours is a rich heritage and we love our music.

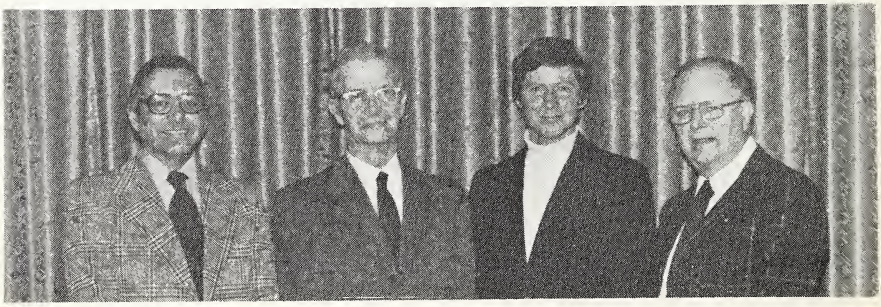
When was the last time you heard Jesus Loves Me, an echo of your Sunday School days? How about Chetek and Jesus Makes My Heart Rejoice or the Hosanna on Palm Sunday? Hearing these and other well-loved songs, as generation follows generation, makes us aware that our church music is as endless as time itself.

The brasses perform

ELDERS 1978: Wayne Paschke, Elizabeth Schroeder, Reginald Adams



CONFIRMANDS 1978: David Nelson, Lars Topelmann, Carrie Landstrom



TRUSTEES 1978: Glenn Gerdman, Philip Cherry, Paul Wilson, Gilbert Farmer, Robert Anderson - not pictured

TODAY AND TOMORROW

In the course of 125 years, hundreds of local residents - - and summer people too - - have strengthened this church in a variety of ways. To name a few would be omitting others equally worthy.

Remembered well are the sailors, resort operators, fishermen and storekeepers. All are known through their descendants or in stories passed along.

It took a rugged nature and great determination for those first pioneers to survive on this sometimes alien land; an effort sustained by encouragement and hope within the common bond of the congregation.

Traces of this heritage are evident in the working lives of people here today, and there is an aura of calm and confidence in their approach to the future.

The congregation honors its pioneers, takes pride in the church building and in all of its human endeavors recognizes a higher authority

". . . yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk." (Hos. 11:03)

HERE ASSEMBLED

ADAMS, Reginald & Nedra
ANDERSON, Robert & Betty, Mark, Scott
ANDERSON, Violet (Mrs. Harold)

BACKMANN, Harold & Carol, Dirk, Patrick, Christopher
BACKSTROM, Helen (Mrs. Conrad)
BECKER, Mary Lou (Mrs. Carl)
BERGMAN, Jean I. (Mrs. Arthur)
BIERMAN, Lori
BIERMAN, Richard A. & Claire, Richard
BILLERBECK, Angela Jo
BILLERBECK, Patti
BILLERBECK, Rodney & Eileen, Rodney Jr.
BLOOMER, Ben
BLOOMER, Violet
BYFIELD, Abbott & Betty

CHERRY, Philip R. & Martha
COX, Roger E. & Jeanne
CRAMER, Robert Jr. & Pat
CRUM, Larry

EATOUGH, Lester & Elsie
EDGE, Elizabeth (Mrs. Elliott), Erica

FARMER, Gilbert J. & Jeanne L.
FISHER, Ruth (Mrs. R.W.)
FLOTTMAN, Judith (Mrs. Paul)
FREY, Ruth E. (Mrs. Lester)

GASKILL, Mabel (Mrs. Oliver)
GERDMAN, Diane
GERDMAN, Glenn & Joyce
GERDMAN, Shelley
GOTTSCHALK, John & Louise

HAGMAN, Catherine
HAGMAN, Deane & Barbara, Leif, Eric, Carin
HAGMAN, Deanna
HALVORSEN, Ralf E. & Dorothy
HANSON, Adelyn (Mrs. Roy E.)
HEISE, Cornelia
HEISE, Hedy E.
HEISE, Lorenz & Ellamae
HELPS, William & Dorothy
HOEFERT, Richard
HOEPPNER, Edmund & Pearl
HOEPPNER, Ted W. & Jeanette
HOLLISTER, Ann
HORVATH, Pat (Mrs. Arpad), Kevin

JACOBS, Erich
JACOBS, James & Marjorie
JACOBS, Karl P.
JACOBS, Katye
JACOBS, Kurt
JACOBSON, Darrell & Eileen, Jeffrey, Dale
JOHANSEN, John & Berniece
JONES, Roy & Ruth
JUSTINEN, Helen (Mrs. Henry A.)

KAMINSKY, Alberta (Mrs. Ole)
KEMP, Gertie (Mrs. George)
KNUDSON, Floyd & Laurel
KOEHLER, Bernice
KOEHLER, John
KOEHLER, Kathy
KRIST, Keith & Priscilla

LANDSTROM, Carrie
LANDSTROM, Jack & Karen, Tim
LANDSTROM, Heide E.
LANG, Fred W.
LANG, Josephine (Mrs. Elmer)
LARSEN, Charles S. & Marcia
LARSON, Maurice & Marie
LARSON, Norman & Ruth
LARSON, Maud (Mrs. Reuben)
LARSON, Roger & Norma, Daryl, Brian

McCUMMINGS, Alice (Mrs. Lloyd)
McMULLEN, Verna
MANSON, Elizabeth (Mrs. Henry)
MORTON, Jerome R. & Lorraine

NELSON, David
NELSON, James
NELSON, Randall & Ruth, Paula
NELSON, Tim

OLSON, Bruce
OLSON, Lloyd & Marion
ONESON, Gordie

PASCHKE, Charles A.
PASCHKE, Sarah
PASCHKE, Wayne & Glenore, Jody
PILLSBURY, Harriet (Mrs. Lewis E.)

RASMUSSEN, Amos & Ethel
REDMANN, Andriette
RISPENS, Cynthia (Mrs. Mark)
RUTHERFORD, Eunice
(Mrs. Raymond F.)
RUTHERFORD, Melinda Sue

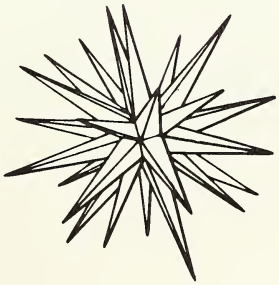
SCHROEDER, Gene
SCHROEDER, James & Leone
SCHROEDER, Robert & Elizabeth, Jill
SHAFFER, Sylvia (Mrs. Kenneth)
SEILER, Mary (Mrs. Otto)
SHEA, Henry & Jane
SHEA, Malinda
SMITH, Elda
SMITH, Irma
SOHNS, Arnold E.
SOHNS, David
SOHNS, Glen & Lucille
SOHNS, William & Helen
STAVER, Marvin & Betty
STENZEL, Carla (Mrs. Terry)
STEVENS, David

TELFER, Sidney & Inez
THIELL, Peter & Josephine
THORP, Bert & Gloria
THORP, Burt
TOPELMANN, Lars
TOPELMANN, Tanja

VALENTINE, Ed & Barbara, Ed. Jr., Kittie
VALENTINE, Kittie (Mrs. Everett)

WEBORG, Niles & Joan, Scott, Merikay
WEBORG, William N.
WEDEPOHL, Marguerite (Mrs. William)
WEDEPOHL, William Jr.
WHEELOCK, Horace & Berdella
WHITE, Alice (Mrs. Edward)
WILSON, Harold & Verna
WILSON, Mary
WILSON, Paul & Kay, Brian
WYSONG, Susan (Mrs. Dennis), Jeremy

ZAYAC, Evelyn (Mrs. John)



EPHRAIM MORAVIAN CHURCH

EPHRAIM, WISCONSIN

125th Anniversary Observance - 1978

— — — — —

May 14th - Confirmation, Reception of Members
10:45 a.m.

May 17th - Anniversary Banquet
6:00 p.m.
at the Village Hall, Ephraim

May 20th - Anniversary Lovefeast
4:30 p.m.

May 21st - Anniversary Service
10:45 a.m.
The Rt. Rev. James G. Weingarth, Bethlehem, Pa.

(Dedication of Redecorated Church Interior)

— — — — —

Special Summer Anniversary Event

July 30th - James Salzwedel and the Hussite
Bell Ringers from Winston-Salem, N.C.

— — — — —

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & CREDITS

Cover ..... Martha Cherry

Artwork ..... Joan Weborg

Photography ..... Glenn Gerdman

Special Copy ..... Ted Hoeppner
John Johansen
Ruth Nelson

Advisory Committee ..... Patti Billerbeck
Josephine Lang
Maurice Larson
Elizabeth Schroeder

Booklet Committee ..... Henry Shea
Jane Shea
Jody Thiell
Kay Wilson

Publisher ..... Door Reminder
Ellison Bay, WI

A sincere thanks to all who contributed pictures and information.

Produced by the Ephraim Moravian Church, Ephraim, Wisconsin 54211.

This is a non-profit publication and may not be duplicated without written permission.

VICIT·AGNUS·NOSTER
EUM·SEQUAMUR